

# MEET YOUR SECRET WEAPONS FOR A HEALTHY LYMPHATIC SYSTEM



Why movement is your best defence against lymphoedema



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**Heel raises while waiting for the kettle to boil. Dancing when a good song comes on your radio. There are lots of easy ways building movement into our day - and keeping our lymphatic system healthy.**

Movement isn't just good for our heart, lung and mental health. It's great for our lymphatic health too. And a healthy lymphatic system is a key to our overall health. That's because the lymphatic system helps defend the body against illness and keeps our body fluids in balance. When the lymphatic system isn't working properly, fluid builds up in your tissues, which causes swelling (lymphoedema) as well as other health problems.

## Why movement matters

Unlike the heart, the lymphatic system doesn't have a pump, so we need to help it along. When we move our bodies, our muscles pump and we breathe deeper. These actions increase the flow of lymph around the body. This prevents or reduces any swelling, as well as helping our body get rid of bacteria and other unwanted substances.

## What movement should I do?

Anything which involves moving, stretching and breathing more deeply is good. Walking fairly briskly is great for stimulating lymphatic function. You can also keep yourself active and healthy by doing more of 'everyday' activities in the home or garden and being more aware of avoiding long periods of sitting still. Take every opportunity to move and stretch. You'll find lots of tips for lymphoedema-safe movement on **[thebls.com](http://thebls.com)**.

## What about if I have lymphoedema?

Movement is one of the best things you can do to keep your lymphoedema under control. Research has shown that there are many activities that are both safe and beneficial if you have lymphoedema. These include brisk walking, aerobics classes (in person or online), yoga and even weightlifting. It is important to discuss any plans for being more active with a lymphoedema practitioner or other knowledgeable professional, especially if you've been inactive for a while.



# Don't forget

- If you have been prescribed a compression garment, always wear these when being active and make sure these are a good fit.
- Breathe deeply to encourage better circulation of blood and lymph.
- Build up gradually. If you notice swelling becomes worse, stop the activity until the swelling goes back down. You can restart, but take it a bit slower and easier

You'll find lots of tips for how to get started with lymphoedema-safe movement on [thebls.com](https://thebls.com).

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